

THE FOREST SERVICE . . .

Becoming a better agency to do business with.



A report to the partners and customers of
State & Private Forestry about how we are improving
our program assistance and service delivery.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

A Customer Focus...

As partners and customers of State & Private Forestry programs, you've likely been doing business with our agency for some time. We've enjoyed a cooperative and collaborative relationship, and sustaining this relationship is vital to us.

Although we find that you are generally satisfied with the quality of assistance we

provide, we know there is room for improvement. You said we should provide a more customer-friendly grants application process and improve the way we communicate and provide information. We can and must do more, so we are working hard to improve our business practices and our communication and cooperation with you.

We're Listening...

The process of becoming more customer friendly begins by listening to you, our customers. The difference between talking about it and doing it is measured by whether you see any real change.

We began listening to you by convening focus groups of customers in Minneapolis, MN, Athens, GA, and Sacramento, CA.

From these focus group discussions, a survey of questions about the delivery of State & Private Forestry programs was designed (an excerpt is shown below). To ensure objectivity, a private-sector marketing consultant conducted this survey at a variety of locations around the country.

1.	Technical Assistance. These statements apply to State & Private Forestry in the area of technical assistance.	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree	
a.	I am informed about State & Private Forestry's technical assistance role.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b.	The people I deal with in State & Private Forestry listen carefully to my requests for information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
c.	I receive basic technical assistance when I need it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
d.	I receive expert technical assistance when I need it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
e.	My contacts help me understand and interpret laws and program rules and regulations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

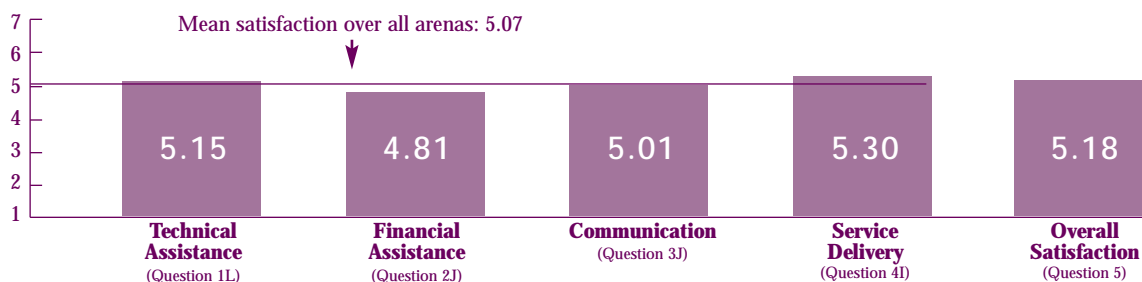
What You Told Us...

Survey results indicate that you are generally satisfied with the delivery of State & Private Forestry services. An "average" rating for surveys of this type is 5.0. On a scale of 1 to 7, you rated our program delivery from a

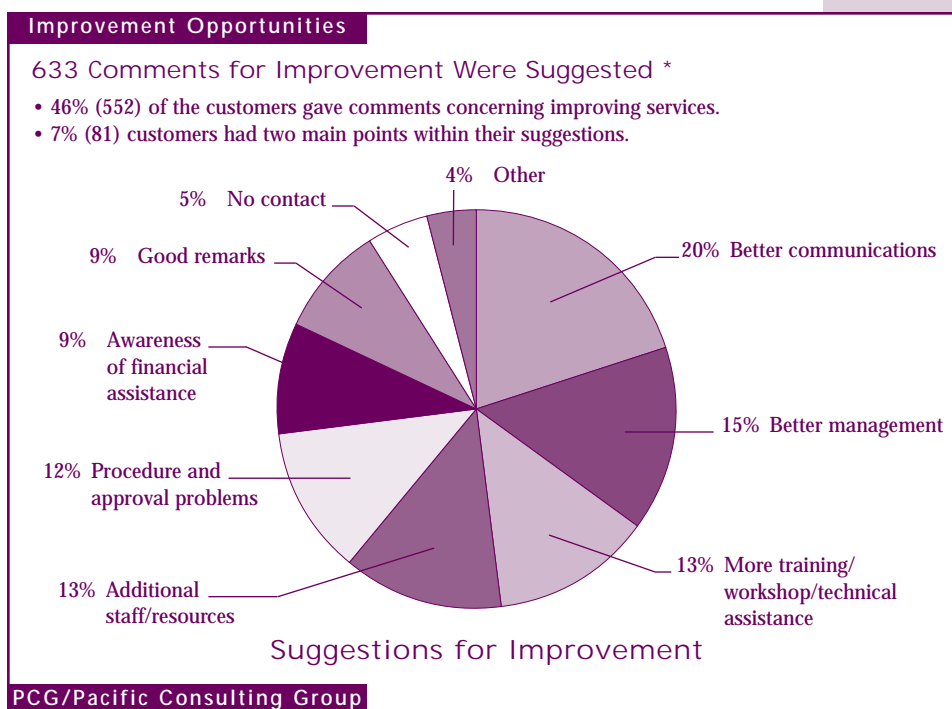
low of 4.81 (Financial Assistance) to a high of 5.30 (Service Delivery). Because we are not satisfied with these ratings, we are pursuing opportunities to improve our performance.

Customer Satisfaction Ratings

Mean Satisfaction Ratings By Arena and For Overall State and Private Services



You also offered specific suggestions for improvement:



We're Changing...

We've got work to do to improve your level of satisfaction. We know you want frank answers and real solutions to the issues you raised in the survey. Since this survey was

completed in November 1997, we have conducted action planning sessions at many field locations and we are implementing changes. Here are some of them.

You told us you want easier ways to locate and obtain our technical publications, so we are:

- Creating a comprehensive publications listing with information on how and where to order.
- Making many publications available to you on local web pages.
- Improving our electronic mailing lists for faster distribution of publications to targeted customers.

You told us you need simpler, more customer-friendly grant application procedures, so we are:

- Providing you more personal and direct assistance with current regulations at our field office locations.
- Offering you sample applications and financial reports in a simple, easy-to-use workbook.
- Conducting grants development workshops at locations and times that are convenient for our customers.
- Streamlining and shortening the grants application process by implementing the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services system of electronic application and payment.



You told us we need to do a better job of keeping you informed about program changes and eligibility requirements, so we are:

- Posting program factsheets on the World Wide Web and at local offices with current information about programs, eligibility requirements, how to apply, and Forest Service contacts.
- Providing you with more access to this information by linking our State & Private Forestry website to websites of other Forest Service field locations, State foresters, and other Federal agencies.

You told us that we could provide more convenient service by offering complete information at one contact point, so we are:

- Establishing one-stop-shopping service where customers can obtain all publications, forms, and program information at one convenient location.
- Establishing one-stop shopping by May 1, 2000, at the Northeastern Area Office and regional offices.

And We Intend To Keep At It...

These changes are just the beginning. We know that they don't resolve all of your concerns, but they're a start. Our aim is to steadily improve our relationship with you and to raise your level of satisfaction.

This is a continuous process, and we're committed to it.

For more information, visit the Forest Service website at www.fs.fed.us

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